

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

## 1. Name

historic Willing, Dr. George M., Home

and/or common Fleming Home and/or Joseph Denton Home

## 2. Location

street & number 211 Jefferson Street not for publication

city, town Fulton vicinity of congressional district #8 - Hon. Richard Ichord

state Missouri code 029 county Callaway code 027

## 3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Denton

street & number 211 Jefferson Street

city, town Fulton vicinity of state Missouri 65251

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder of Deeds Office

street & number Callaway County Courthouse

city, town Fulton state Missouri 65251

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title 1. Missouri Historic Sites Catalog has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1963 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Missouri

city, town Columbia state Missouri 65201

## 7. Description

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☒ unaltered  
☐ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Dr. George M. Willing home is a two-story red brick Greek-Revival house dating from the mid-nineteenth century and built on the end-chimney I plan -- two equal rooms divided by a central hall. Distinguishing features of the gable-roofed structure are the six colossal pilasters which divide the front facade into five bays, and a massive hand carved solid walnut circular stairway in the front entrance hall. The original gable-roofed ell on the rear of the house was removed in 1961 and replaced with a modern one-story shed-roofed addition.

### EXTERIOR

The original house measures 43'6" in length (north-south) and 18'6" in depth (east-west). The rear addition measures 34' in width and 16' in depth and is flush with the north side of the house. The house is constructed of red brick laid in common bond on a hand-hewn stone foundation with a molded water table. The walls of the lower part of the house are four bricks thick and taper to three brick thick at the second floor level. The bricks were fired in the local brickyards and were probably made by slave labor.

The primary entry is located in the recessed center bay. Flanking the original single 4-panel front door on each side is a fluted engaged column, and these are surrounded by sidelights and an 11-light rectilinear transom, all of which is framed by an architrave with Greek-Revival molded "ears". Directly above the front entry is another door opening onto a small porch measuring about 10' by 3 1/2' which overhangs the front entrance. The original porch had sagged and was rebuilt in 1961 complete with a new railing. Molding with Greek-Revival "ears" frames the original door, which contains 12 lights above and 2 panels below. Both doors measure 40" in width and 84" in height and still have the original hardware and box locks. The six pilasters are of the same brick as the house, undecorated except for the plain stone capitals at the top. Two steps lead to a raised entrance platform measuring approximately 9' by 12'.

Heavy stone lintels and lug sills surround the 6-over-6 light windows which have been restored. The windows each measure 78" tall and 36" wide, and the individual panes measure 10" by 18". The original pins used to install the windows when the house was built, can still be seen. Louvered wooden shutters give the primary (east) facade an attractive appearance.

The gable roof of the original house is shingled and trimmed with a plain boxed cornice with returns. There are no windows on the north and south end walls. Three windows remain on the rear (west) side of the original house, one on the first story at the south end, and two on the second level, at the north and south ends of the house. A fourth window, located on the second story level, have been bricked in.

### INTERIOR

Basement: A basement is located beneath the southwest quarter of the house. Huge hand-hewn blocks of stone form the basement floor and the exposed stone foundation forms the basement walls.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

WILLING, DR. GEORGE M., HOME

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 6 PAGE 1

2. Missouri State Historical Survey  
1977 state  
Department of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City Missouri 65102

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

2. Interview with John B. LaMar, Route 1, Fulton, Mo., on April 7, 1979 by Averiel Cooper. Mr. LaMar is the great-nephew of Dr. George Willing.
3. Meyer, Duane. The Heritage of Missouri: A History. St. Louis: State Publishing Co., Inc., 1963.
4. Powell, Donald M. The Peralta Grant. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960.
5. Missouri Historical Review, "Missouriana," Vol. 34, January, 1940.
6. Fulton, Mo. Telegraph, 1855-1880.
7. Williamson, Hugh P. The Kingdom of Callaway. Fulton, Mo.: n.p., 1967.
8. Willing House Abstract, held by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Denton, Fulton, Mo.

ITEM NUMBER 11 PAGE 1

2. James M. Denny, Section Chief, Nominations-Survey  
and State Contact Person March 17, 1980  
Department of Natural Resources 314/751-4096  
Historic Preservation Program  
P.O. Box 176 Missouri 65102  
Jefferson City

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

WILLING, DR. GEORGE M., HOME

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

First Floor: The front entrance opens onto a wide foyer which contains the prime attraction in the house -- the massive 180° circular stairway of hand-carved solid walnut. The stairway is 41" wide, extending to a width of 64" at the two turns. Doors on either side of the entry lead to rooms measuring approximately 17' by 17' with 10' ceilings.

Second Floor: Upstairs the spacious foyer opens onto two bedrooms and the small porch over the front entrance. Like the rooms downstairs, these also measure approximately 17' by 17' and have 10' ceilings. Closed door closets, installed in 1961, line the outer walls on side of a heating stove.

The original 9" wide hand-hewn oak floor boards are now concealed by new hardwood floors. In 1960, the walls also were replastered and the foot-wide Greek-Revival molded "ears" woodwork framing the windows and doors on the interior was renovated.

### SITE

Located at 211 Jefferson Street, a short distance south of the main business district of Fulton, Missouri, and two blocks west of U.S. Highway 54, the structure faces east in an area of one-family dwellings. A building, located in the back yard, serves as an antique shop. The Willing House is also four blocks south and two blocks east from Westminster College and its accompanying National Register sites of the Churchill Memorial and the Westminster College Gymnasium.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

WILLING, DR. GEORGE M., HOME

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

great care, I am prepared to offer to the trade greater inducements than ever."<sup>6</sup> Another ad gives examples of merchandise offered and lists among them "rich" goods presided over by Mrs. Willing.<sup>7</sup> He was not a successful businessman, and in 1858, Dr. and Mrs. Willing left Fulton and returned to St. Louis to again set up a practice in medicine.<sup>8</sup>

In 1859 Dr. Willing led a party from Missouri, which eventually numbered one hundred wagons, to the Pikes Peak region of Colorado to search for gold which had been discovered the previous year. After 60 days on the road, the party reached Denver, but it was never successful in reaching the gold.<sup>9</sup> The "Pikes Peak or Bust" migration left a population of 30,000 in the Colorado territory, and a delegation, of which Willing was a member, was sent to Washington to secure the formation of a new territory under the name of Jefferson, but did not succeed.<sup>10</sup>

Failing in his political ambitions in Colorado, Willing and his wife returned to Fulton by the outbreak of the Civil War. The War found the people of Fulton solidly in support of the Confederate cause. Fulton was occupied during the greater part of the War by Union soldiers, and southern sympathizers were in constant threat of imprisonment. Willing, a known supporter of the Confederacy, was arrested and taken to the Federal prison in Jefferson City. However, he was rescued by his wife, who, taking a slave with her, rode on horseback to Jefferson City where she appealed to the Federal Officer in charge, a Mason, that her husband also a Mason, was not guilty and deserved his help. The Officer released Willing. Returning to Fulton the following day, they were passing at the home of Dr. Willing's niece when her husband arrived from town and said that upon hearing of Dr. Willing's release from prison, the Officer in Charge of the Union troops stated that before morning he would re-arrest and imprison Willing on another charge. Hearing this, Willing escaped to a nearby field where he spent the night hiding in a corn shock. The next morning the Union soldiers went to this same cornfield to get feed for their horses, and one of the soldiers narrowly missed stabbing Dr. Willing when he stuck a bayonet into the corn shock where the man was hiding. That night, Dr. Willing borrowed a mule and escaped to St. Louis.<sup>11</sup>

Although Dr. Willing never returned to Fulton, it is known that he visited the Arizona territory in 1864 at the head of a well-appointed prospecting party, which was apparently successful, and resulted in the forming of the Willing Mining and Exploring Company, which apparently was financially successful. On another trip to Arizona in 1867, he acquired from heirs, title to a property originally deeded by the King of Spain to Don Peralta, and which embraced about four-fifth of the state of Arizona, known as the Peralta grant. The rest of Willing's life was devoted to an attempt to obtain formal recognition of his right to legal possession of this grant. He returned to Arizona once again in 1874 to attempt to develop his claim and was murdered in a Prescott hotel room the night of his arrival.<sup>12</sup>

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED

WILLING, DR. GEORGE M., HOME

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

After her husband's death, Mrs. Willing returned to Fulton to help her brother, whose young wife had died of tuberculosis, raise his family until 1904 when she returned to her family home in Kentucky. In 1886, she released the Willing claim to the Peralta land in exchange for \$100,000 in stock in the land company.<sup>13</sup>

When Dr. Willing left Fulton in 1862, his home remained the Willing family until 1904. Throughout the years the home changed owners several times, eventually being chopped up into small apartments. In 1960 it was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. C.E. Pearre, who spent several years restoring it as much as possible to its original state. Because the city of Fulton took over half of the property for a public housing project, the Pearres sold the house without ever living in it.

From 1967 until the Dentons purchased it in 1978, the house was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Emmet L. Fleming and known at the Fleming home.<sup>14</sup>

### FOOTNOTES

1. Missouri 1840 Census for St. Louis County. State Historical Society of Missouri.
2. Hugh P. Williamson, The Kingdom of Callaway (Fulton, Mo.: n.p., 1967) pp. 50-51.
3. George M. Willing, "Climate of California," The Western Journal and Civilian. Vol. 10, April, 1853, pp. 20-25.
4. Interview with John B. LaMar, Route 1, Fulton, Mo., on April 7, 1979 by Aver Cooper. Mr. LaMar is a great-nephew of Mrs. George M. Willing, wife of Dr. George Willing, the builder of the Willing house. He vividly recalls his visits and conversations with his great aunt and her accounts of her life and especially her travels with Dr. Willing.
5. Fulton Telegraph, June 16, 1854.
6. Fulton Telegraph, April 24, 1857.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. "Missouriana," Missouri Historical Review, Vol. 34, January, 1940, p. 240.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

WILLING, DR. GEORGE M., HOME

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE

3

10. Ibid. Williamson, pp. 48-54. Williamson does not cite the location of the original Willing journal of his trip to Pike's Peak nor the location of his letters to his wife but Williamson's chapter on Willing quotes them extensively.
11. Ibid. LaMar interview.
12. Donald M. Powell, The Peralta Grant (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), p. 20. Powell gives a lengthy discussion of Willing's mines, his claim to the Peralta grant and to the years of litigation which ensued.
13. Ibid. p. 78.
14. Abstract of Willing House, held by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Denton, Fulton, Mo.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Local History

Specific dates 1855–1874 Builder/Architect George N. Willing - Builder

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The George N. Willing House is historically and architecturally significant as a visual emblem of a life-style which characterized that region of Missouri known as Little Dixie. This Greek Revival house, built in 1855, is one of the few remaining examples of antebellum brick architecture in Fulton, Missouri. It represents the stately elegance of a formal, ordered way of life of a man who attempted to become a permanent member of the Fulton community but whose visions and destiny belonged to the energies of westward expansion.

Dr. George Willing, whose renaissance interests and entrepreneurial spirit gives meaning to that stereotype of the 19th-century American "on the make" who invaded the fringes of the frontier and induced boom economies where resources permitted. With interests spanning the medical field to the mining fields, Willing travelled from New York to New Orleans to Missouri to Arizona in search of wealth, knowledge and adventure. Typical of so many Missourians in the antebellum society, he and his family came from Kentucky in the 1830's with ideas of better and cheaper land and quicker wealth.

Previous to coming to Missouri, the Willing family had lived in Hancock County, Kentucky where George N. Willing was born sometime between 1825 and 1830. In the 1830's the family moved to St. Louis where Willing's father practiced medicine and trained his son in the profession. He sent his son to New Orleans to study cholera treatment.<sup>1</sup> Willing, Jr. returned to practice medicine in St. Louis with the treatment of cholera his specialty. In the 1840's cholera was epidemic along the Missouri River, and Willing travelled through many of Missouri's river towns. During his travels he met John Charles Fremont and agreed to accompany the explorer on one of his western expeditions.<sup>2</sup> Though the date of the journey is uncertain, an article appeared in 1853 issue of the St. Louis Western Journal entitled "Climate of California" by Willing. The article would place him in California during the gold rush and is descriptive of California's climate, natural resources and geology.<sup>3</sup>

By 1853, Willing had begun a medical practice in St. Aubert, a Missouri river town, and had married Mary LaMar of Kentucky.<sup>4</sup> The spring of 1854 placed him in Fulton for the first time, as the operator of a general store. His older brother, William, is already an established merchant in Fulton, and in 1856 the two businesses merged into "Willing and Brother."<sup>5</sup>

Dr. Willing and his wife travelled extensively in the East, where they attended operas, concerts and balls, and the two-story brick home that Dr. Willing had built for them, probably in 1855, reflected the elegant manner in which they lived. An advertisement in an 1857 Fulton newspaper reads: "Having selected my stock in the Eastern cities of New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Pittsburg, personally and with

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Census, 1840 Missouri for St. Louis County. State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approximately 1/4 acre

Quadrangle name "Fulton, Mo."

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A 

1	1	5
---	---	---

5	0	1	1	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	2	0	0	9	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

  
Zone Easting Northing

B 

--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

  
Zone Easting Northing

C 

--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

E 

--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

F 

--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

G 

--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

H 

--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 10 of block 54 of the New City Plat of Fulton, Missouri and located in the Southeast Quarter of Section 17, Township 49N, Range 7W in Callaway County, Missouri.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title 1. Averiel Cooper, Priscilla Evans, Phyllis Strawn

organization University of Missouri - History Dept. date June 22, 1979

street & number 143 Arts & Science, History, telephone 314/882-3892

city or town University of Missouri

Columbia state Missouri 65211

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Director, Department of Natural Resources and  
State Historic Preservation Officer

date

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

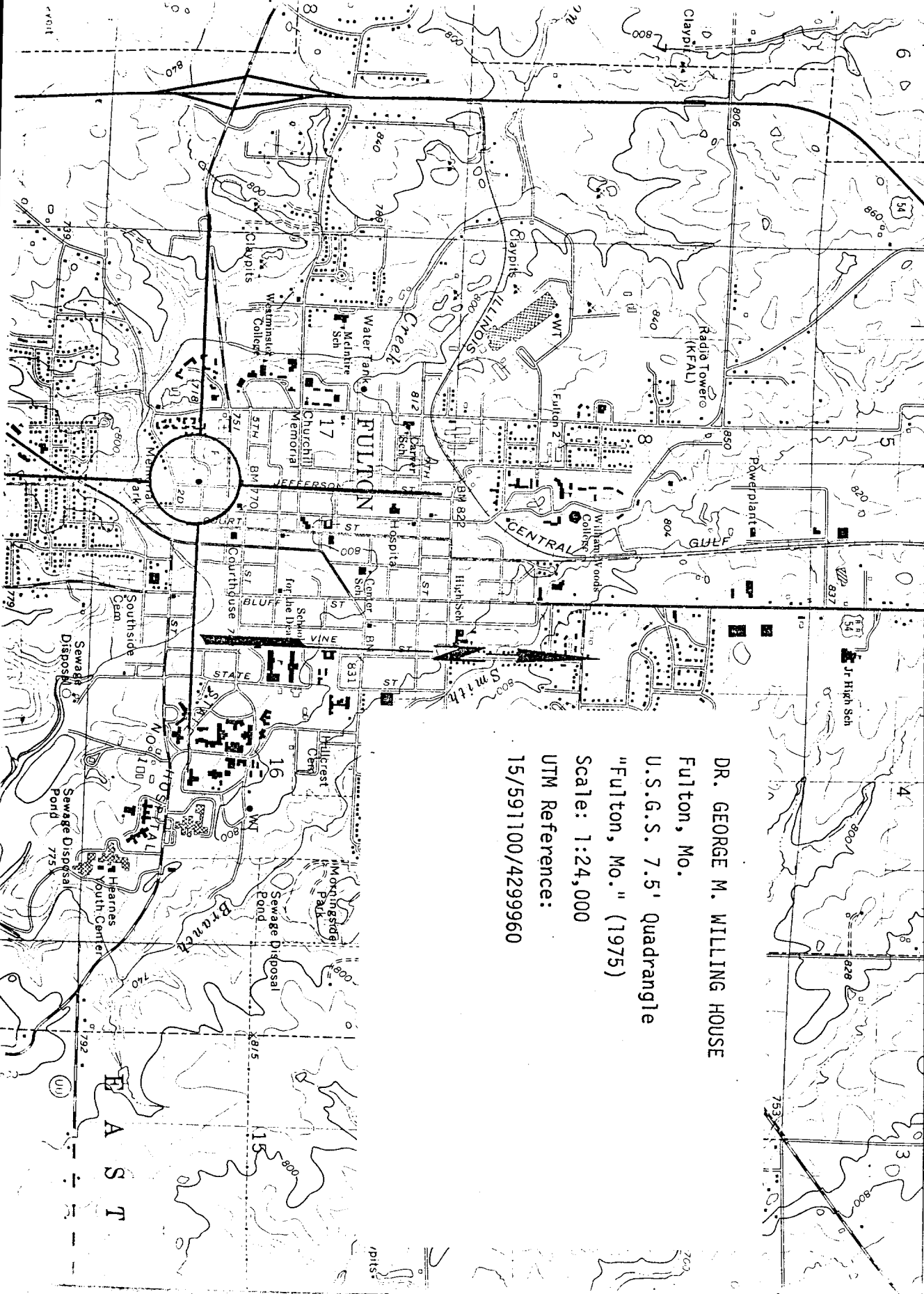
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

CAW...

75/591100/4299960



SITE PLAN MAP  
WILLING, GEORGE (HOUSE)  
211 JEFFERSON STREET  
FULTON, MISSOURI

STABLES (GONE)

SLAVE HOUSE (GONE)

SOME STEPPING STONES WHICH LED TO  
SLAVE HOUSE EXIST IN THIS AREA



NOT TO SCALE

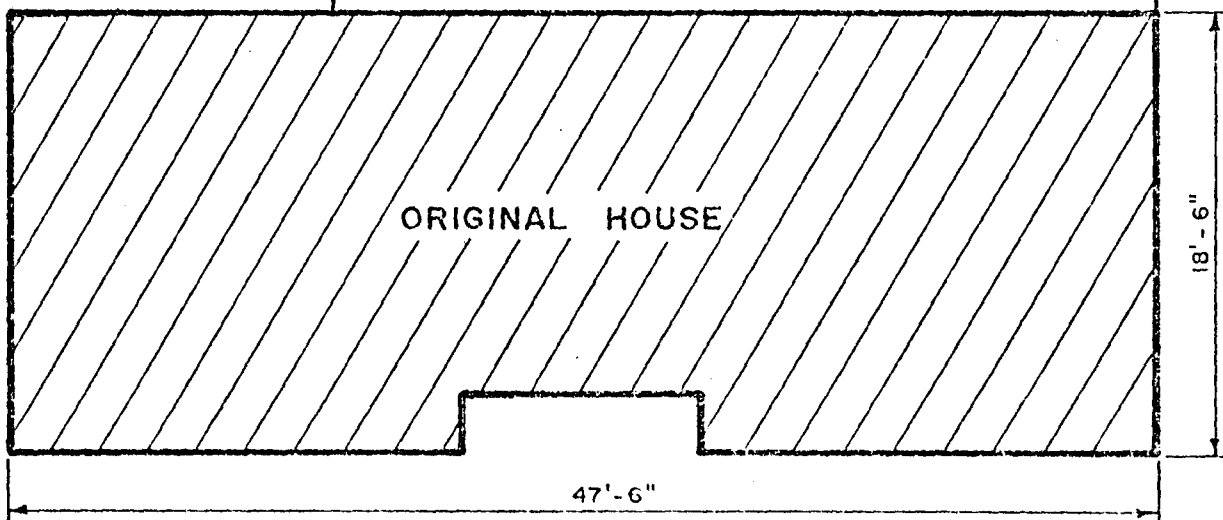
GARDENS (GONE)

BACK ENTRY



ADDITION

BASEMENT  
ENTRY



ADAPTED FROM A DRAWING BY  
AVERIEL COOPER 4/1/79

WILLING, DR. GEORGE M., HOUSE

#449

COUNTY:

Callaway

LOCATION:

211 Jefferson Street  
Fulton, Mo

OWNER:

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Denton

ADDRESS:

211 Jefferson Street  
Fulton, MO 65251

DATE APPROVED BY A.C.:

April 25, 1980

DATE SENT TO D.C.:

July 18, 1980

DATE OF REC. IN D.C.:

July 22, 1980

DATE PLACED ON NATIONAL REGISTER:

October 3, 1980

DATE CERTIFICATE AWARDED  
(AND PRESENTOR):

July 15, 1981  
James M. Denny

DATE FILE REVIEWED:

The George M. Willing House is historically and architecturally significant as a visual emblem of a life-style which characterized that region of Missouri known as Little Dixie. This Greek Revival house, built in 1855, is one of the few remaining examples of antebellum brick architecture in Fulton, Missouri. It represents the stately elegance of a formal, ordered way of life of a man who attempted to become a permanent member of the Fulton community but whose visions and destiny belonged to the energies of westward expansion.

WILLING, DR. GEORGE M., HOME  
211 Jefferson Street  
Fulton, Callaway County, Missouri  
Photographer: Hank Koch

1 of 6

May 8, 1979

Neg. Loc.: 109 Westwood Ave.  
Columbia, Missouri 65201

Primary facade, view to Northwest.



WILLING, DR. GEORGE M., HOME #2 of 6

211 Jefferson Street

Fulton, Callaway County, Missouri

Photographer: James M. Denny

May 11, 1980

Neg. Loc.: Department of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 176

Jefferson City, Mo. 65102

Primary facade, view to the northeast.



WILLING, DR. GEORGE M., HOME #3 of 6

211 Jefferson Street  
Fulton, Callaway County, Missouri

Photographer: James M. Denny

May 11, 1980

Neg. Loc.: Department of Natural Resources

P.O. Box 176

Jefferson City, Mo. 65102

View to the southeast.



WILLING, DR. GEORGE M., HOME #4 of 6  
211 Jefferson Street  
Fulton, Callaway County, Missouri  
Photographer: James M. Denny  
May 11, 1980  
Neg. Loc.: Department of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, Mo. 65102  
View of primary entrance from the east.



WILLING, DR. GEORGE M., HOME  
211 Jefferson Street

#5 of 6

Fulton, Callaway County, Missouri

Photographer: James M. Denny  
May 11, 1980

Neg. Loc.: Department of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, Mo. 65102

Interior view of entrance hall.



WILLING, DR. GEORGE M., HOME #6 of 6  
211 Jefferson Street  
Fulton, Callaway County, Missouri  
Photographer: James M. Denny  
May 11, 1980  
Neg. Loc.: Department of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, Mo. 65102

Interior view of entrance hall from the east  
showing curving staircase.

